



Oregon

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TO: The Honorable Brian Clem, Chair
House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water

FROM: Michael Morrissey, Policy Analyst
Department of Land Conservation and Development

RE: HB 3368

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 3368. This bill originated with a request by the previous planning director for Hood River County, who asked that commercial wedding venues that are approved as home occupations in EFU and forest zones be allowed to take place outdoors. Statute currently requires that home occupations in farm and forest zones be operated substantially in a dwelling or other building normally associated with uses permitted in the zone. There is a reason for this standard, which is to minimize the potential for outdoor commercial uses to conflict with nearby farm and forest operations as well as neighbors. This standard places a natural constraint on the size and nature of home occupations, and minimizes noise and other impacts.

However, the proposed bill would open up EFU and forest zones across the state to a wide range of permanent outdoor commercial uses and activities that are not currently authorized in these zones. These could include not only standing venues for weddings, festivals, concerts and other celebratory events, but also large-scale intensive commercial uses. None of these uses are intended to be allowed in EFU and forest zones, and none are traditionally associated with home occupations as allowed in other parts of the country. In the last few years, statute has been amended to allow agritourism and other commercial events at wineries and on farms. These are generally larger properties that can absorb some of their impacts through their size. These new allowances provide a potential route for Hood River County and other counties to use to allow a certain number of wedding venues on agriculturally zoned lands. However, there are tens of thousands of dwellings in EFU and forest zones across the state that would qualify for wedding venues and other outdoor commercial uses as home occupations under the proposed bill. The potential proliferation of such uses in zones intended to protect working farm and forest land is concerning.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with information about HB 3368. If committee members have questions about this testimony, please contact me at 503-975-4004, or michael.morrissey@state.or.us.